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ABSTRACT

This report on Nova Southeastern University (NSU) fulfills a requirement by the state of Florida for participation in an accountability process. Data is presented for three broad categories: student demographics; faculty measures, including demographics, undergraduate teaching loads, contact with undergraduates, and analysis of undergraduate class size; and bachelor's degree completion, including demographics of degree recipients, six-year graduation rates for first-time full-time college freshmen, three-year graduation rates of associate of arts transfer students, and data on accumulated debt of four-year graduates. The report identified three areas of strength for NSU: (1) small undergraduate class size, (2) efficient progression to bachelor's degree completion: first-time full-time undergraduates graduated in a mean of 4.1 years, and (3) all students transferring to NSU with associate degrees from state community colleges were able to enroll in their major of choice in space-limited fields of study in the state university system. In addition, NSU awarded bachelor's degrees to students from racial/ethnic minorities at a proportionately higher rate than for all state higher education institutions as a group, and three-year graduation rates of full-time associate of arts transfer students often exceeded those for other state institutions. Appended is a list of total enrollments at independent colleges and universities in Florida. (JM)

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Nova Southeastern University

Nova Southeastern University State Accountability Data. Indicators of Quality, Productivity, Diversity, and Access

Blair Atherton
Director of Institutional Research

July 1999
Research and Planning
Report 99-10

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Florida statute requires independent colleges and universities eligible to receive state funding from the Florida Resident Access Grant (FRAG) to participate in an accountability process. In response, the ICUF Accountability Report was developed by representatives of the Florida Postsecondary Education Planning Commission (PEPC) in collaboration with the ICUF presidents. All ICUF institutions and the University of Miami submit accountability reports annually to ICUF. Data from participating institutions are then compiled by ICUF into a single report submitted to PEPC.

This research report summarizes data from NSU's 1998 Accountability Report and cites relevant comparative data from the 1998 ICUF Accountability Report, the SUS Accountability Report, and the SUS Fact Book. It also provides some notes concerning the background or intended purpose of the various types of data that comprise the Accountability Report. The data focus primarily on undergraduates.

Data fall into three broad areas:

- Student demographics

- Faculty measures, including demographics, undergraduate teaching loads, contact with undergraduates, and analysis of undergraduate class size.

- Completion of the bachelor's degree, including demographics of bachelor's degree recipients, six-year graduation rates for first-time in college, full-time freshmen, three-year graduation rates of associate of arts transfer students, and data on accumulated debt of four-year graduates.

Three areas of strength were identified for NSU and for ICUF as a whole:

- Small undergraduate class sizes. The mean class size at NSU was 16.

- Efficient progression to bachelor's degree completion. First-time in college full-time undergraduates graduated in a mean of 4.1 years.

- Access to undergraduate fields of study that are space-limited in the state university system (SUS). All students transferring to NSU with an A.A. degree from a Florida community college were able to enroll in the major of their choice.

In addition, NSU awarded bachelor's degrees to students from racial/ethnic minorities in proportions higher than ICUF or SUS institutions as a group. Moreover, the three-year graduation rates of full-time A.A. transfer students at NSU most often exceeded those for both the SUS and ICUF as a group.

Although the majority of the data demonstrate strengths of the undergraduate college, some weaknesses were also identified. The six-year graduation rate for first-time in college full-time freshmen at NSU was at the low end of the range in graduation rates for both ICUF and SUS institutions. NSU also utilizes part-time faculty to teach undergraduate classes more than any other ICUF institution. Sixty-three percent of undergraduate classes offered by NSU in fall 1998 were taught by part-time faculty versus 27% for ICUF collectively.

The accountability report process has required data collection in several areas that were not previously tracked with any regularity at NSU. Furthermore, the ICUF Accountability Report prepared for PEPC provides a rich source of comparative data that describes the principal independent colleges and universities in Florida.

Introduction

The Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida (ICUF) Accountability Report was created in response to Florida Statute 240.147. The statute requires all independent postsecondary institutions eligible for the Florida Resident Access Grant (FRAG) to participate in an accountability process.

A deficiency in the statute and its application in the state is that only institutions that are members of ICUF participate in the accountability process for the independent sector (see Appendix A for a listing of ICUF institutions). Other regionally accredited institutions that are not members of ICUF, and non-regionally accredited proprietary institutions do not participate in an accountability process. One could argue that it is the latter group of institutions that may need close monitoring by the State.

The ICUF Accountability Report and the types of data to be included were developed by the Postsecondary Education Planning Commission (PEPC) in consultation with the ICUF Presidents in 1994. Subsequently, the directors of institutional research of ICUF institutions met to refine the measures and to develop standard definitions and methodology for data collection. The institutional data collectors made further refinements to the process and expanded the report to include additional data elements in 1998. There have been five cycles of accountability reporting (including the 1998 report) since the process began in 1994.

The Florida State University System (SUS) was required to participate in an accountability process for a number of years before the ICUF accountability process began. The data elements included in the processes for the two sectors have only minimal overlap and the two processes were developed largely independent of one another. Reports for the two sectors also have evolved independently since their inception.

The ICUF process is viewed by some as more compact and less convoluted than the SUS accountability process. PEPC has requested only the addition of information on Florida residents over the last five years, and approved all additions to the Accountability Report initiated by the ICUF institutional data collectors.

An important element of any reporting process is use of the information it contains. The data received from individual ICUF institutions is compiled and summarized into a single ICUF Accountability Report that is submitted to PEPC annually. The Executive Director of ICUF also distributes copies to the ICUF presidents and the designated data collector at each institution. ICUF members use the report as a source of comparative data from other independent colleges and universities in the state.

PEPC uses the ICUF Accountability Report as a source of data for its own internal studies and analyses. The commission also uses selected data from the report in its periodic publication entitled "Florida Higher Education At-A-Glance".

PEPC distributes the report to its commission members, the legislature, the Board of Regents of the SUS, the board overseeing the Community College System, and the State Board of Independent Colleges and Universities. How and to what extent the data contained in the ICUF Accountability Report are used by these various bodies is unknown. In any case, it provides a ready source of data for comparing ICUF institutions with each other and with the SUS.

This research report summarizes data from NSU's 1998 Accountability Report and cites relevant comparative data from the 1998 ICUF Accountability Report, the SUS Accountability Report, and the SUS Fact Book. It also provides some notes concerning the background or intended purpose of the various types of data that comprise the Accountability Report.

Methods

Methods prescribed for collection of data for the ICUF Accountability Report are contained in the document *Guidelines for Institutional Accountability Reports, 1998-99*. Some of the data in the Accountability Report come from required federal reports, such as the IPEDS Fall Enrollment Survey, the IPEDS Completion Survey, and the IPEDS Fall Staff Survey. Other data comply with federal requirements and data standards or definitions, as appropriate. For example, data on rates of graduation comply with requirements of the Student Right-to-Know Act. However, the bulk of data required in the Accountability Report cannot be extracted from existing federal or state reports. Data definitions and collection methodology were developed by the ICUF institutional data collectors for data not taken from governmental reports.

Comparative data for SUS institutions came from the 1997-98 *Fact Book* of the State University System of Florida. Comparative data concerning class size came from the 1997 SUS *Accountability Report*.

RESULTS

Student Demographics

An area of interest to legislators is access of students from racial/ethnic minorities to higher education opportunities in the state. Table 1 below shows the racial/ethic distribution of NSU students enrolled in fall 1998.

Table 1
Racial/Ethnic Distribution of Students Enrolled Fall 1998

	Total Students		Undergraduates		Graduate and Prof.	
By Gender	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Male	5,852	36%	1,247	30%	4,605	39%
Female	10,198	64%	2,906	70%	7,292	61%
Total	**16,050**	100%	**4,153**	100%	**11,897**	100%
By Race/Ethnicity	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
White	9,824	61%	2,128	51%	7,696	65%
Black	2,354	15%	761	18%	1,593	13%
Hispanic	2,213	14%	817	20%	1,396	12%
American Indian or Alaska	59	0%	22	1%	37	0%
Asian or Pacific Islander	640	4%	89	2%	551	5%
Non-Resident Alien	629	4%	247	6%	382	3%
Race/ethnicity unknown	331	2%	89	2%	242	2%
Total	**16,050**	100%	**4,153**	100%	**11,897**	100%
Florida Residents	13,843	**86%**	3,833	92%	10,010	84%

Racial/ethnic and gender data came from the IPEDS Fall Enrollment Survey.

University-wide 33% of all students enrolled in the fall 1998 term were from racial/ethnic minorities. This compares favorably with 31% minorities enrolled in ICUF institutions as a group, and 32% minorities enrolled in the SUS. When nonresident aliens are classified according to race/ethnicity, minorities represent approximately 35 percent of the total enrollment at NSU.

The largest proportion of students from minorities (41%) was at the undergraduate level. This is substantially higher than the SUS where approximately 34% of undergraduates were minorities. At NSU, the highest proportion of blacks (18%) and Hispanics (20%) were undergraduates. NSU graduate and first-professional programs enrolled 30% and 32% minorities, respectively.

The Postsecondary Education Planning Commission (PEPC) is occasionally called upon by the Florida legislature to analyze the financial impact of changing the amount awarded to students for the Florida Resident Access Grant (FRAG). Therefore, PEPC requested addition of data on Florida residency to the Accountability Report.

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All Florida residents enrolled in a regionally accredited independent college or university in Florida are eligible for the FRAG. The grant was $1,800 per year for the 1998-99 academic year. Residency data in the ICUF Accountability Report not only facilitates financial analysis, but it, along with other types of data, provides a measure of the contribution made by ICUF institutions to the higher education of Florida residents. NSU's contribution was substantial with almost 14,000 Florida residents enrolled in fall 1998 (see the bottom of Table 1).

Faculty Measures

Faculty Demographics

Table 2 shows the racial/ethnic and gender distribution of the full-time faculty at NSU. These data may have been included in the accountability process in part as a measure of access of minorities to employment as faculty in higher education. The information also complements similar data for students and allows comparison between the representation of minorities in the student body versus the faculty.

Table 2
Racial/Ethnic and Gender Distribution of Full-Time Faculty Fall 1998

By Gender	No.	Percent
Male	270	59%
Female	186	41%
Total	**456**	100%
By Race/Ethnicity	No.	Percent
White	390	86%
Black	18	4%
Hispanic	21	5%
American Indian or Alaska	0	0%
Asian or Pacific Islander	20	4%
Non-Resident Alien	7	2%
Race/ethnicity unknown	0	0%
Total	**456**	100%

Faculty demographics at NSU are similar to those for ICUF as a whole and for the SUS. Thirteen percent of NSU full-time faculty are from racial/ethnic minorities compared to 19% for ICUF overall, and 18% for the SUS.

Teaching in Undergraduate Programs

The purpose of the indicators in the accountability process that measure teaching loads (Figure 1) and the number of undergraduate sections taught by full-time faculty (Figure 2) was to address the undergraduate teaching productivity of faculty. Many institutions (especially those

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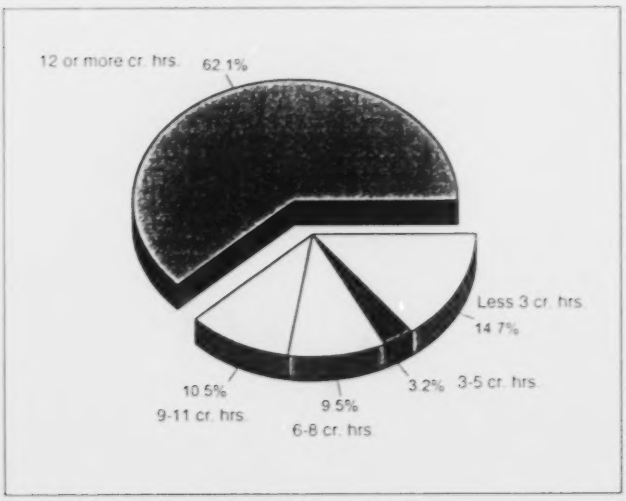
in the SUS) have faculty research as an important component of their mission. A potential drawback of a strong emphasis on faculty research is a reduction in full-time faculty teaching loads to provide time for research. There was concern among legislators and their constituencies that undergraduate student contact with full-time faculty, particularly senior faculty, was reduced due to increasing commitments of full-time faculty to research activities.

Figures 1 and 2 below show the distribution of undergraduate teaching loads and the proportion of course sections taught by NSU faculty in the Farquhar Center for Undergraduate Studies, the School of Computer and Information Sciences, and the Health Professions Division physician assistant program by faculty rank. Almost two-thirds of all faculty teaching undergraduate courses carried a full-time load in fall 1998. Nearly three-fourths had a load of at least nine credit hours. This is consistent with the primary mission of teaching at NSU. Nevertheless, faculty loads at NSU may be reduced to provide time for research and/or administrative duties.

Figure 1
Fall 1998 Undergraduate Teaching Loads of Full-Time Faculty



	Number of Full-Time Faculty by Rank				Total Faculty at Each Load	
Teaching Load	Full Prof	Assoc Prof	Assist Prof	Instructor/ Lecturer/ Visiting	Number	Percent
< 3 credit hours	1	4	9		14	15%
3-5 credit hours	1	1	1		3	3%
6-8 credit hours		1	4	4	9	9%
9-11 credit hours	1	3	3	3	10	11%
> 12 credit hours	6	17	21	15	59	62%
Column Totals	9	26	38	22	95	100%

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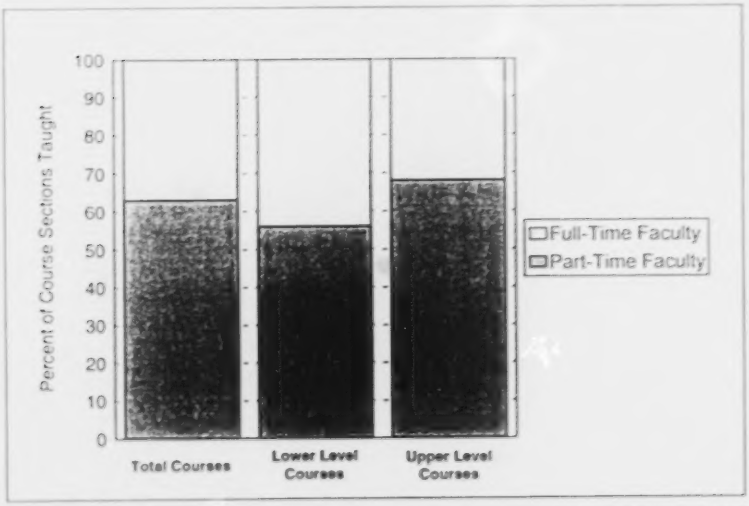
Figure 2 and the upper part of the associated table below show the proportion of undergraduate course sections taught by full-time and other regular faculty, versus part-time faculty in fall 1998. Sixty-three percent of all undergraduate course sections delivered in fall 1998 at NSU were taught by part-time faculty. Although this proportion is high, it should be noted that NSU does not use graduate teaching assistants. In contrast, SUS institutions commonly use teaching assistants to complement the full-time faculty teaching at the undergraduate level.

Figure 2
Proportion of Undergraduate Course Sections Taught by Full-time and Part-time Faculty Fall 1998



Faculty Status	Undergraduate Sections Taught by Level					
	Lower Level		Upper Level		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Total Full-time and Other Regular Faculty	179	44.1%	200	32.0%	379	36.8%
Part-time Faculty	227	55.9%	425	68.0%	652	63.2%
Total Sections	406	100%	625	100%	1031	100%

Faculty Rank	Lower Level		Upper Level		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Full Professor	16	8.9%	25	12.5%	41	10.8%
Associate Professor	51	28.5%	54	27.0%	105	27.7%
Assistant Professor	47	26.3%	76	38.0%	123	32.5%
Instructor/Lecturer	42	23.5%	22	11.0%	64	16.9%
*Other Regular Faculty	23	12.8%	23	11.5%	46	12.1%
Total Sections taught by Full-time and Other Regular Faculty	179	100%	200	100%	379	100%

*Other regular faculty include visiting faculty and faculty emeriti.

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For ICUF institutions as a group, 27% of undergraduate course sections were taught by part-time faculty, with a range of 6-63% for individual institutions. St. Leo College and NSU had the largest proportion of sections taught by part-time faculty (56% and 63%, respectively). Less than 30% of undergraduate sections were taught by part-time faculty at 18 of 26 ICUF institutions. Furthermore, 68% of all upper level sections were taught by part-time faculty at NSU versus 26% for ICUF as a whole.

The lower portion of the table in Figure 2 shows the distribution by faculty rank of only those undergraduate course sections that were taught by full-time and other regular faculty. Approximately 39% of this subset of undergraduate course sections were taught by senior faculty (associate professors and full professors). Approximately equal proportions (38-40%) of upper level courses were taught by senior faculty and assistant professors, while less than one-fourth were taught by instructors and unranked faculty.

Undergraduate Class Size

In the accountability process, the size of undergraduate classes is seen as a factor contributing to the quality of instruction. Small classes are a strength of both NSU and the ICUF institutions collectively. The mean undergraduate class size for the fall 1998 term at NSU was 16 students, and the mean class size for ICUF institutions as a group was 19 with a range of 15-30 students. Independent/directed study, supervised research, internships, and laboratories were excluded from class size distributions and mean class size calculations.

Although comparative data on class size distribution was not available for SUS institutions, classes at Florida state universities can be quite large, especially introductory lower level general education classes. The mean undergraduate lecture section size for individual SUS institutions ranged from 26-47 students (1996-97 SUS Accountability Report).

Figure 3 below shows the distribution of undergraduate class sizes at NSU in the fall 1998 term. Seventy-five percent of all classes at NSU contained fewer than 20 students. Ninety-five percent of all classes offered at NSU had less than 30 students compared to 84% for classes offered at ICUF institutions. The largest undergraduate sections in fall 1998 at NSU were classes in the in the physician assistant program that contained 78 students. The largest *lower level* undergraduate section in fall 1998 at NSU was a class in the principles of macroeconomics that contained 44 students.

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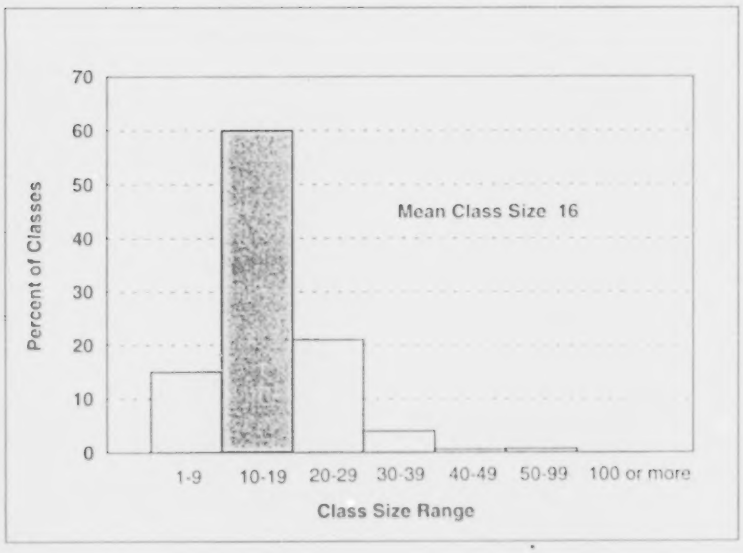
Figure 3
Fall 1998 Distribution of Class Sizes at NSU



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Completion of the Bachelor's Degree

Bachelor's Degrees Awarded

In the original Accountability Report developed by PEPC, six-year graduation rates for first-time in college, full-time freshmen (FTIC's) were the primary productivity measure. However, these students often represent only a small fraction of the undergraduate population at ICUF institutions. At NSU, only 26% of all freshmen in fall 1998 were FTIC's and only 23% were full-time FTIC's. Consequently, the total number of bachelor's degrees awarded annually was added to the Accountability Report as a measure of the overall productivity of ICUF institutions in undergraduate education.

Table 3 below shows the racial/ethnic and gender distribution of NSU's bachelor's degree recipients who graduated during the period July 1, 1997-June 30, 1998.

Table 3
Racial/Ethnic Distribution of NSU's Bachelor's Degree Recipients
Graduating During the Period July 1, 1997-June 30, 1998

By Gender	No.	Percent
Male	290	28%
Female	733	72%
Total	**1,023**	100%
By Race/Ethnicity	No.	Percent
White	525	51%
Black	157	15%
Hispanic	226	22%
American Indian or Alaska Native	4	0%
Asian or Pacific Islander	18	2%
Non-Resident Alien	90	9%
Race/ethnicity unknown	3	0%
Total	**1,023**	100%

Source: IPEDS Completions Survey

Collectively, ICUF institutions awarded 11,838 bachelor's degrees during the 1997-98 fiscal year. NSU awarded approximately nine percent of all bachelor's degrees awarded by the 26 ICUF institutions and the University of Miami. Seventy-two percent of NSU's bachelor's degrees were awarded to women during the period. This is consistent with the continual majority enrollment of women at the university for at least the last five years.

Thirty-nine percent of bachelor's recipients at NSU were from racial/ethnic minorities. This is 10% higher than at ICUF institutions as a group (29% to minorities), and eight percent higher than at SUS institutions (31% to minorities).

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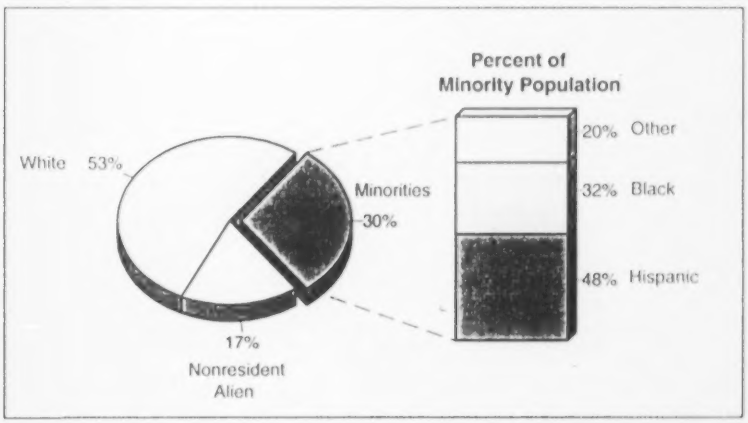
Six-Year Graduation Rates for First-time in College, Full-time Freshmen

Institutions that participate in the NCAA have been required to report six-year graduation rates for first-time in college, full-time freshmen for many years. More recently these data became a federal requirement under the Student Right-to-Know Act (SRK). Methodology used to collect these data for the Accountability Report comply with federal requirements. In the State of Florida accountability process, these data are seen as a measure of the quality and productivity of undergraduate programs.

Figure 4 shows the racial/ethnic distribution of the fall 1992 entering cohort of first-time in college, full-time freshmen for which the graduation rate was calculated. Demographics of entering freshmen cohorts were included to provide some context in which to interpret the results and to demonstrate access by minorities and women.

Figure 4
Racial/Ethnic Distribution of First-Time in College Freshmen Entering NSU in Fall 1992



Thirty percent of students in the cohort were from racial/ethnic minorities and 49% were women. In the aggregate, the fall 1992 cohort at ICUF institutions included 30% minorities also and 48% were women. In comparison, 38% of full-time lower level undergraduates enrolled in fall 1993 at the SUS were minorities and 53% were women.

Table 4 below shows the six-year graduation rate for first-time in college, full-time freshmen entering NSU in fall 1992 by race/ethnicity and gender. The NSU fall 1992 cohort graduation rate of 31% is similar to that found for the 1990 and 1991 entering cohorts (Atherton, 1997). The rate is substantially lower than the aggregate rate of 47% across all ICUF institutions and at the lower end of the range in graduation rates of 16% (Edward Waters College) to 59% (University of Miami) for individual independent colleges and universities. The aggregate six-year graduation rate for SUS institutions was 60% with a range of 33%-64%.

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Table 4
Six-Year Graduation Rate for First-Time in College Full-Time Freshmen Entering NSU in Fall 1992

			Graduated as of August 31, 1998		Still Enrolled in Fall 1998		Graduated + Still Enrolled	
By Gender	No. in Original Cohort	% of original cohort	No.	% by category	No.	% by category	No	% by category
Male	75	51%	20	27%	1	1%	21	28%
Female	72	49%	25	35%	1	1%	26	36%
Total	**147**	100%	45	31%	2	1%	47	32%
By Race/Ethnicity								
White	78	53%	16	21%	1	1%	17	22%
Black	14	10%	9	64%	1	7%	10	71%
Hispanic	21	14%	6	29%	0	0%	6	29%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Asian or Pacific Islander	8	5%	3	38%	0	0%	3	38%
Non-Resident Alien	25	17%	11	44%	0	0%	11	44%
Race/ethnicity unknown	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	**147**	100%	45	31%	2	1%	47	32%

Three-Year Graduation Rates for Associate of Arts Transfer Students from Florida Community Colleges

Since many ICUF institutions receive students transferring from Florida community colleges after receipt of their associate of arts degree (A.A.), graduation rates for this group were included in the Accountability Report. Data are reported for full-time students entering ICUF institutions with an A.A. degree from any of the 28 Florida community colleges. Table 5 shows three-year graduation rates for A.A. degree transfer students that entered in fall 1993, 1994, and 1995.

Table 5
Three-Year Graduation Rates of Full-Time Transfer Students Entering with an Associate of Arts Degree from a Florida Community College

Institution/Sector	Fall 1993 AA Transfer Cohort			Fall 1994 AA Transfer Cohort			Fall 1995 AA Transfer Cohort		
	No. of Transfers	Graduated in Three Years		No. of Transfers	Graduated in Three Years		No. of Transfers	Graduated in Three Years	
		No.	Percent		No.	Percent		No.	Percent
NSU	55	45	82%	59	42	71%	51	35	69%
ICUF	607	401	66%	600	395	66%	568	405	71%
SUS	9,028	5,292	59%	8,927	5,241	59%	N/Avail		

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Transfer student graduation rates at NSU were higher than comparable rates for the ICUF and SUS sectors (except in 1995). While the three-year graduation rates for ICUF and the SUS as a whole appear to remain constant, those at NSU show some variability. This likely is due to the relatively small number of students in NSU cohorts.

Efficiency of Bachelor's Degree Completion

At the time the ICUF Accountability Report was being designed by PEPC, the SUS had large numbers of students that were accumulating a lot of credit hours in excess of the amount required for graduation in their major. There was a variety of reasons for this, including additional course work required as a result of transfer from a community college or SUS institution where there was insufficient articulation of general education and other courses required for graduation. In response, the SUS began to monitor the number of credits students were accumulating in excess of minimum graduation requirements, and students were charged additional fees for credits more than 15% in excess of the number required for graduation. It was in this climate that measures of "time to degree" were incorporated into the ICUF Accountability Report.

To assure a well defined starting point for baccalaureate studies, cohorts of first-time in college, full-time entering freshmen were chosen as the student group to examine in this accountability measure. Mean credit hours required to graduate per the college catalog were compared to the actual number of credits accrued at graduation to determine the number of excess credits accumulated. The mean number of years it took members of the cohort to graduate was a supplemental measure of "time to degree".

At NSU, the mean number of credits (per catalog) needed to graduate with a bachelor's degree was 122 credits for the cohort entering in fall 1992. Mean credits actually accrued by the fall 1992 cohort at graduation were 123. The excess credits for ICUF institutions as a group was six credits. The mean number of years for members of the fall 1991 and 1992 entering cohorts at NSU to graduate was 4.1 years compared to 4.2 years for ICUF overall. Excess credits beyond those required for the bachelor's degree were typically in the 20's for SUS institutions.

Average Debt Accumulated by Four-Year Bachelor's Degree Graduates

Over the years, state support for students attending independent colleges and universities in Florida has come in the form of the Florida Resident Access Grant (FRAG). It seems to be a constant struggle to either maintain FRAG funding or to increase previous allocations made by the legislature. Key to arguments for continuance and/or an increase in FRAG support for students is the high tuition at independent colleges and universities compared with tuition at public institutions. It is in this context that PEPC included data concerning the average accumulated student debt in the ICUF Accountability Report.

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The selection criteria for students to be included in debt calculations were very restrictive and resulted in low numbers of students for analysis for most ICUF institutions. The selection criteria were as follows:

- Began at the institution as a first-time in college freshmen.
- A permanent resident of Florida
- Received the FRAG during their first fall term of attendance at the institution
- Borrowed under one or more of the following loan programs:
    - Subsidized or unsubsidized Stafford Loans
    - Perkins Loans
    - Institutional Loans

Students who met the above criteria, graduated within four years, and graduated during the period July 1 through June 30 were included in the analysis. Table 6 below shows data for NSU students for the last four years. All students in the table participated only in the Stafford loan program; neither Perkins nor institutional loans were awarded to these students.

Table 6
Mean Debt Accumulated by First-Time in College Freshmen at NSU
Four-Year Bachelor's Degree Graduates
Students Who Graduated During the Period July 1 - June 30

Graduation Period	No. of Students with Loans	Mean Cumul. Debt
1997-1998	14	$25,907
1996-1997	5	$15,257
1995-1996	4	$22,870
1994-1995	6	$18,967
Total Students/ Aggregate Mean	29	$21,790

At NSU and other ICUF institutions, the mean cumulative debt may vary considerably from year-to-year. Because of this and the small number of students used for calculations, data for any one year may not accurately reflect the actual average debt. Table 6 shows that the mean cumulative debt based on pooled data for the last fours years was $21,790. While this aggregate mean may be slightly better, the pool size is small (only 29 students). By comparison, NSU's financial aid office reported to the College Board that the average cumulative indebtedness of undergraduates graduating in 1997 was $23,498. The comparative mean cumulative debt for first-time in college freshmen graduating with a bachelor's degree from ICUF institutions as a group was $15,834 for the 1997-98 fiscal year.

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Discussion

The accountability process has been helpful to the ICUF institutions as a group in several ways. First, publication and distribution of descriptive data contained in the report has familiarized constituencies that receive copies (esp. the Florida Legislature) with ICUF institutions individually and collectively. Comparative data included in the report clearly demonstrate that the ICUF sector is very similar to SUS institutions in the demographics of students and faculty, in access to higher education for minorities and women, and in many key performance measures.

It has also demonstrated particular strengths of the ICUF sector that include:

- small undergraduate class sizes
- efficient progression to bachelor's degree completion
- access to undergraduate programs/fields of study that are space-limited in the SUS

Overall, the data show that NSU exhibits these same strengths. Further, the proportion of bachelor's degrees awarded by NSU to students from minorities was almost 10% higher than the SUS and ICUF as a group. Another strength of NSU is in the high graduation rates of transfer students entering with an A.A. degree from Florida community colleges. NSU rates most often exceed those of both the SUS and ICUF as a group. However, the number of A.A. transfer students appears to be low. This may relate to the very restrictive criteria used in this accountability measure for inclusion of students in the cohorts used for analysis. As a result only a small subset of the total transfer students are selected for study.

Although the preponderance of data included in the accountability report point to strengths of NSU's undergraduate college, the data also reveal a few weaknesses. The six-year graduation rate of first-time in college full-time freshmen at NSU (31%) remained at the lower end of the range in graduation rates for individual institutions in ICUF and the SUS. In fact, the six-year graduation rate was one of the few areas in which ICUF performed at a lower level than the SUS; the rate for ICUF as a whole was 47% versus 60% for the SUS. It should be noted that generally SUS institutions have higher entrance requirements than ICUF colleges and universities.

Another area where NSU stands out compared to the ICUF group is in the proportion of undergraduate classes taught by full-time faculty. Only 37% of undergraduate courses offered in fall 1998 at NSU were taught by full-time and other regular faculty compared to 73% taught by full-time and other regular faculty for ICUF as a whole.

The accountability process has expanded the types of data tracked on an annual basis by NSU. Examples of such data may include examination of undergraduate teaching loads by academic rank of full-time faculty (Figure 1), the proportion of upper and lower level courses taught by full-time versus part-time faculty, and by faculty rank (Figure 2), graduation rates of A.A. transfer students (Table 5), and the mean number of credits accrued at graduation. Another

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benefit of the accountability process to NSU and other ICUF institutions is that the annual report provides a rich source of comparative data for the principal independent colleges and universities in Florida. Furthermore, the availability of a variety of data that demonstrate the substantial contributions of the independent sector to higher education in Florida has helped advocate for continued support via the FRAG and other state programs.

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Appendix A

The Independent Colleges and Universities of Florida

Institution/Degrees Offered	*Year Established	Location	**Total Enrollment
Associate's and Bachelor's Degrees			
Florida Hospital College of Hlth Sciences	1992	Orlando	553
International College	1990	Naples	711
Bachelor's Degrees			
Bethune-Cookman College	1904	Daytona Beach	2,481
Clearwater Christian College	1966	Clearwater	622
Eckerd College	1959	St. Petersburg	1,504
Edward Waters College	1866	Jacksonville	662
Flagler College	1968	St. Augustine	1,669
Florida College	1944	Temple Terrace	495
Florida Memorial College	1879	Miami	1,771
Ringling School of Art & Design	1931	Sarasota	884
Southeastern College	1935	Lakeland	1,078
Warner Southern College	1964	Lake Wales	781
Bachelor's & Master's Degrees			
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University	1926	Daytona Beach	4,699
Florida Southern College	1885	Lakeland	2,656
Jacksonville University	1934	Jacksonville	2,117
Lynn University	1963	Boca Raton	1,806
Palm Beach Atlantic College	1968	West Palm Beach	2,065
Rollins College	1885	Winter Park	3,455
Saint Leo College	1889	St. Leo	7,518
University of Tampa	1931	Tampa	2,990
Webber College	1927	Babson Park	473
Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctoral Degrees			
Barry University	1940	Miami Shores	7,376
Florida Institute of Technology	1958	Melbourne	4,267
Nova Southeastern University	1964	Ft. Lauderdale	16,050
Saint Thomas University	1962	Miami	2,098
Stetson University	1883	Deland	2,968
^University of Miami	1925	Coral Gables	13,422

*Source:999 Higher Education Directory, Higher Education Publications., Inc.
**Source: IPEDS 1998 Fall Enrollment Survey
^The University of Miami is not a member of ICUF.

Adapted from the 1998 ICUF Accountability Report.

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